

Complications of Oral Communications

Long before the invention of the stone tablets, scrolls, and the printing press the only way anything was communicated was orally. However, the first century church shared the teachings of Jesus through oral communications. Although there were ways to record things in writing it was a long and tedious task furthermore, only a small number of people could read. As the Christian church continued to grow and people of other cultures became believers the church faced several challenges when it came to communicating the gospel. In this paper, I will discuss some of the obstacles they faced concerning oral tradition.

During the developmental stages of Christianity all the believers were Jewish and they all spoke Aramaic. Everyone was well versed in Judaic tradition so communication was simple. However, Christianity began to spread due to persecution, and believers who travelled to other places for business reasons. As believers shared the Jesus tradition with people from other areas they had to overcome different language barriers. Some of these barriers were translating Hebrew terms into Greek terms without changing the context. Furthermore, Gentiles were not familiar with Jewish culture and traditions.

Another problem that arose after the Dispersion is that there were Hellenistic Jews that could not speak Aramaic. As society changes after Roman rule, so did the language and the customs. So, believers had to present the Jesus tradition in a way so others could understand without changing the context. Moreover, the gospel had to be shared so new believers would know how to apply the teachings of Christianity into their daily lives. Besides, there was the problem of pagan religions. New believers wanted to incorporate some of the former worship practices into Christianity. However thanks to the guidance of the Holy Spirit the church was able to survive the early obstacles to Christianity.